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The Challenge of Gorbachev's "New Thinking" in Arms Control and Foreign Policy

The Dimension of Change Under Gorbachev

- o Combined military strength with far more creative political aims to achieve security objectives.
- o All out pursuit of strategic arms agreements aimed at putting the United States on the defensive... Gorbachev is willing to take unprecedented measures to reach closure -- intrusive verification, "zero-zero" option.
- o Gorbachev's team has employed a more sophisticated approach to Soviet foreign policy -- Angola, Cambodia-- highlighted by its withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- o While the Allied leadership (except Genscher) remains wary, Gorbachev has successfully cultivated the West European populace.

Predicating Factors

- o Leadership consensus for need to take bold steps to revitalize Soviet economy and population (the "resource" issue).
- o Gorbachev's pragmatic yet bold approach backed by a decisive and risk-taking mode of problem solving.
- o Fractionated opposition within the military has allowed Gorbachev to set the agenda for national security and foreign policy initiatives (mixed long-term implications of Gorbachev's game plan vis-a-vis the military).

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Implications for Future Arms Control Discussions

- o Basic objectives -- protection of newly deployed systems, resource transfer to civil sector, reduction in Western perception of Soviet "threat" -- remain unchanged.
- o Pattern of surprise moves to curry public opinion and seed discord within NATO likely to continue; sudden reversals of negotiating positions cannot be ruled out.

Implications for Foreign Policy Initiatives

- o Soviets continue to make headway in improving relations with Arab states.
- o Potential for Soviet gains in relations with key U.S. allies such as South Korea need serious attention.
- o Moscow will likely continue steps designed to improve its position with our NATO allies.
- o The USSR will continue to press for an enlarged role in the international economic arena including a presence in international economic organizations and pressure on Western firms and governments to sign up to major joint-ventures with Soviet producers.

Gorbachev's Staying Power

- o How far Gorbachev can or will go is uncertain: opposition to domestic political initiatives has grown and General Secretary may have to moderate his arms control initiatives to maintain allegiance of military or change his economic game plan in order to head off additional popular disillusionment.
- o The potential of his being replaced exists although his position seems secure for now.

Block States
Ethnic Problems

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